

OSMP NCAR Trailhead

Last Updated Tuesday, 15 August 2006

National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR)

Click on the map above for a larger view

LOCATION

West end of Table Mesa Drive, at NCAR.

PARKING

Parking lot at NCAR.

TRAILS

NCAR (0.6 mi; 180 ft.) the first 0.2 miles miles of this trail is also called the Walter Orr Roberts Trail. It goes west on a small mesa, drops to a broad saddle, and then climbs another ridge to a water tank, before dropping into a valley to end at Mesa Trail. NCAR has placed a series of interpretive signs about weather along the Walter Orr Roberts trail.

Mesa Trail (6.9 mi; 410ft.) from NCAR the trail extends north to Chautauqua Park and south to the South Mesa Trail Head.

Skunk Canyon (1.3 mi; 550 ft.) starts at an access point on Deer Valley Road (park with discretion), follows a dirt road to an electrical substation, crosses a brook and comes to a trail fork. The right path leads to NIST, straight ahead goes to Kohler Mesa Trail. The trail contours across two gullies and ends at Mesa Trail in a meadow.

Mallory Cave (0.5 mi; 740 ft.) starts at the junction of Mesa Trail and NCAR Trail. The trail climbs to a large rock outcrop, goes around its southern face and up behind it to the north. Then climbs and scrambles up a solid rock notch to end at Mallory Cave.

Bear Canyon (1.7 mi; 940 ft.) starts at the Mesa Trail about 0.7 mi. south of the NCAR and Mesa Trails junction. Follows

Bear Creek west to end at the junction of the Green Bear and the Bear Peak West Ridge Trails. A branch follows a dirt road east from the start for 1.3 mi across federal land below Table Mesa.

Bear Peak West Ridge (1.6 mi; 1,261 ft.) starts at the junction of Green Bear and Bear Canyon Trails. Climbs south to end at the summit of Bear Peak, el 8,461 ft.

Green Bear (0.9 mi; 944 ft.) starts at the junction of Bear Canyon and Bear Peak West Ridge Trails. Follows a drainage and then a ridge to end at the junction of Green Mountain West Ridge and Ranger Trails.

Fern Canyon (1.2 mi; 2,121 ft.) starts at the Mesa Trail 0.8 mi. south of the junction of the NCAR Trail. Climbs gently southward, then turns west to begin an unrelenting 1,700 ft. climb to end at the summit of Bear Peak, el. 8,461 ft.

ACCESSIBILITY

This area is identified as being popular with people using wheelchairs. See the Trails Accessibility Guide (TAP) (3.44 MB).

RESTROOMS

Located in NCAR building.

PICNIC FACILITIES

No picnic facilities.

BIKE REGULATIONS

Bicycles are not allowed.

DOG REGULATIONS

Dog control requirements vary from trail to trail, so carefully watch for dog regulation signs at trailheads and trail intersections. Dogs must be on a hand-held leash or under voice and sight control standard and display a City of Boulder Voice and Sight tag on most OSMP trails in this area. All dogs must be on hand-held leashes on NCAR and NIST (federal) properties as indicated by pink (NCAR) and light green (NIST) on the map above. This includes the Waler Orr Roberts Interpretive Trail and sections of Lower Skunk, Bear Canyon, and Kohler Mesa trails. Dog excrement removal is required by law.

HORSE REGULATIONS

Horses are allowed on all OSMP trails. Off-trail riding is discouraged to protect rare plants and wildlife habitat. Horses are not allowed at the NCAR parking lot and trailhead, or on NCAR (federal) property, identified as pink on the map above. This includes the Walter Orr Roberts Interpretive Trail on Table Mesa.

WILDLIFE

Black bears and mountain lions inhabit this area. There is a variety of raptors, coyote, fox and mule deer may also be observed in this area.

Before You Go

Please know OSMP rules and regulations.

Please study our six Leave No Trace" Principles to protect the land.

Dog owners: see our special dog page.

Hikers and climbers: Please be aware of all area closures.

Mountain bikers: Follow this link for trails where you can bike.